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STATEMENT

BY

JOSÉ RAMOS-HORTA

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MAUBERE RESISTANCE *

- CNRM -

AT THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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* The National Council of Maubere Resistance is a non-partisan body, based in East Timor, comprising all East Timorese opposition groups, parties, the resistance army and student and underground organizations.

Address:

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured and grateful for the invitation kindly extended to me to be here today to address a gathering of members of the Council on Foreign Relations, the most prestigious institution in this country that for decades has influenced the debate and shaped American Foreign Policy.

I come from a country that is not even classified as a Third World country. I was born and grew up in East Timor, lived my childhood in remote villages, and my first language of communication was Tetun, today the largest indigenous language of East Timor. I knew my country as my own backyard. By truck or horse I travelled everywhere, ventured into remote areas where no white man ever set foot. Where I grew up, the most important event of the year was the arrival of an old truck, at the wheel an old Chinese merchant. Yes, East Timor was poor, undeveloped, neglected by its colonial power, Portugal, itself a neglected and undeveloped country, prisoner of an old and incompetent dictatorship. However, the people of East Timor were happy in their ancestral lands. The traditional tribal society, the religious rites, the delicate relationship between the people and the Earth and the environment survived centuries of Portuguese colonial rule. This is the country I come from, a 18.889 km^2 half-island, with about 700,000 people in 1974, a land potentially rich with proven oil reserves, natural gas, manganese, marble, sandalwood and the best coffee in the world.

All this changed in 1975.

The premeditated massacre of unarmed civilians at the Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili, on 12 November 1991, by Indonesian armed forces was only the latest in a 16-year history of gross and systematic human rights violations perpetrated by the Indonesian armed forces against the people of East Timor. Mass killings, summary executions, imprisonment, all forms of torture, are carried out by members of the occupying forces as a matter of routine.

The 12 November massacre was not an aberration. It fits into an ideology of violence very much ingrained in the Indonesian military culture in which force is an instrument of policy and violence is a means to extract loyalty and obedience. This is the guiding doctrine and normal conduct of the Indonesian military who came into being in 1965 following one of the world's worst episodes of carnage, when an estimated half million to million peasants, workers and innocent Chinese merchants were massacred over a period of six months.

It is in this context and against this background that one has to view the 12 November massacre. The subsequent outrage from the international community at the massacre forced President Suharto to set up the so-called National Commission of Inquiry - led by chief justice Djaelani, a former high-ranking military officer. Amnesty International and Asia Watch, the International Commission of Jurists and the World Council of Churches, among others, have rightly called for an impartial international investigation.

However, we are told by some that we have to accept this so-called Indonesian investigation as proof of the good faith of the Indonesian military.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Would it make sense if the eminent Mr. Pol Pot were invited to head a Commission to investigate the genocide of the Cambodian people perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge? How would you react if Mrs. Imelda Marcos were appointed head of a commission to investigate allegations of corruption in the shoe industry in the Philippines? Why are we being told by some quarters that we should applaud the Indonesian Commission of Investigation?

The efforts of the Indonesian Government to present the 12 November massacre in Dili as an isolated incident are contradicted by all available evidence. I know of orders given by the Indonesian Armed Forces Chief, General Try Sutrisno, to the Dili operational commander to use force on 12 November

1991. These orders were issued three weeks prior to 12 November and reissued three times 24 hours before the tragic event.

In the days immediately following the Santa Cruz massacre, several other massacres took place. On 15 November, 80 people were arrested, blindfolded, their arms tied behind their backs and taken in trucks to a site on the outskirts of Dili, where they were shot and bulldozed into a previously dug pit. On 17 November, another ten people were killed by Indonesian soldiers, and on 18 November seven more people were murdered in cold blood. These included five women, a five-year-old, and a one-year-old baby.

The 12 November massacre exposes the fallacy of Indonesia's claim that the people of East Timor are now happy Indonesians after 500 years of colonial servitude under the Portuguese. Indonesia rules East Timor by force and repression, and yet the culture of violence has not produced the results it wanted. Another way must be found.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The right of the people of East Timor to self-determination is beyond any question. The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council have affirmed this right in several important resolutions and East Timor remains on the General Assembly's list of "Non-Self-Governing Territories."

Indonesia never raised any claims over East Timor between 1945 and 1975. According to its founding fathers, it was the successor state only to the so-called Dutch East Indies. Hence it invaded and annexed West New Guinea even though the people of this territory have absolutely nothing in common with the people of Java. If Indonesia arguably had any legitimate claim over West New Guinea by virtue of the fact that this territory was part of the so-called Dutch East Indies, when the Indonesian leaders invaded East Timor in 1975, they destroyed the legal and historical arguments that sustained their claims over the whole of the Dutch East Indonesia – a geographical expression as artificial as what was the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

If we are to try to find a common denominator in the ethnic strifes that plague places like Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Somalia, to mention but a few, I would submit that the root causes of these conflicts rest on the denial of a people or groups of people to exercise their right to self-determination. Indonesia has ample time to preempt its own disintegration by learning from the errors of other centralist forms of government that did not respect the distinctive ethnic and cultural identities of each group that make up the country.

In June 1974, following the Portuguese Carnation Revolution, on behalf of the East Timorese Social Democratic Party, of which I was a founding member and Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I travelled to Indonesia and met with Foreign Minister Adam Malik and several senior Indonesian officials. Following my conversations with Mr. Malik, I was given a letter in which the following points were made:

> *"The independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people of (East) Timor;*
>
> *"(...) whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence can be assured that the Government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both countries."*

In the course of the discussions, I conveyed to Mr. Malik our desire to develop close relations with Indonesia and our intention to apply for membership in ASEAN. This, in our view, was a clear assurance on our part that an independent East Timor would be an element of peace, security and cooperation in the region.

My apparently successful visit to Indonesia in June 1974 raised hopes in East Timor that Indonesia was blessing the birth of an independent East Timor. In the following months, I held more meetings with senior Indonesian officials, including General Moertopo, President Suharto's right-hand man. I was reassured that Indonesia would not interfere in, and would never use force against, East Timor.

Yet, ladies and gentlemen, I learned one thing. The word of an Indonesian official is given and broken just as easily. On 7 December 1975, pretence and lies were no longer enough. If, as Clausewitz said, war is the continuation of politics by other means, the Indonesian military did carry out this maxim in the extreme – it invaded East Timor.

The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council condemned the invasion, called upon Indonesia to withdraw its forces from East Timor, and reaffirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. I would note that **Security Council Resolution 384 of 22 December 1975 was unanimous**, a rare event at the time of East-West tensions. Yet, Indonesia defied the world and pursued a policy of aggression that by 1980 had resulted in the annihilation of 200,000 people.

The tragic event of 12 November 1991 marks, however, a turning point in the 16-year-old conflict. East Timor is now an international issue which touches the conscience of millions of people around the world. In Indonesia itself, voices of moderation and reason are being heard. There is a realisation that the invasion and annexation of East Timor and the policies of the past 16 years were colossal mistakes. Foreign Minister Ali Alatas himself has publicly acknowledged that the East Timor problem is limiting Indonesia's capacity to intervene more constructively in world affairs, is costly, and a solution must be found.

Mistakes are inherent in the human condition. Indonesian leaders must have the vision and courage of great men who can accept mistakes and propose new directions for their country's policies towards East Timor and, in fact, towards their own society in general.

On the other hand, East Timorese political leaders must also have the vision and courage to meet the Indonesians halfway and reassure them that the people of East Timor wish to find a *modus vivendi* with them and to begin a new chapter in the relationship.

In spite of the untold sufferings inflicted upon us, we continue to extend an olive branch to those who see us as their enemy.

Negotiations without pre-conditions under United Nations auspices

Xanana Gusmao, the Resistance Leader of East Timor, proposed and remains ready to enter into a process of **dialogue with the Indonesian authorities, under the auspices of the United Nations, without pre-conditions, to explore all possible options towards a comprehensive settlement of the problem of East Timor**. The peace proposal put forward by Mr. Xanana Gusmao reflects the stand of all sections of East Timorese society inside East Timor and abroad, as well as the Catholic Church.

The Portuguese government has endorsed this peace proposal and handed it over to the UN Secretary-General in January. Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to elaborate a bit on how I see the unfolding of the peace process. This would involve three phases.

PHASE ONE — ONE TO TWO YEARS

The Portuguese authorities and the Indonesians should commence talks at once, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. This does not necessitate East Timor's direct involvement.

For the first stage, I am proposing a modified version of the "**proximity talks**" followed in the Afghanistan case where, in the face of Pakistan's refusal to sit face-to-face with the Kabul government, the UN acted as "go-between." This should overcome Indonesia's present stance in

refusing to talk directly to the East Timorese. **Alternatively, the East Timorese would merge with the Portuguese delegation.**

This phase of the talks must focus on achieving:

- An immediate end to all armed activities in East Timor;
- immediate and unconditional release of all East Timorese political prisoners;
- Reduction of Indonesian military personnel in East Timor from its current estimated strength of 20,000-30,000 to 1,000 within a six-month period;
- The removal from East Timor of all heavy weapons, tanks, helicopters, combat aircraft, long-range artillery pieces;
- Reduction by 50 per cent of Indonesian civil servants in East Timor;
- Expanding the presence and activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) into every district of East Timor and in strict observance of the Geneva Conventions;
- Access to the territory by UN Specialised Agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, FAO etc, for the purpose of carrying out, within their respective fields of competence, a comprehensive programme on:
    - Restoration and protection of the environment;
    - Voluntary resettlement of the tens of thousands of displaced East Timorese in their ancestral lands;
    - Development projects in every district;
    - Immunization campaign.
- A comprehensive census of the population to be undertaken by the competent UN bodies, a precondition for all the above projects to be carried out effectively;
- A Human Rights Commission to be set up in Dili, headed by the Bishop, comprising a number of East Timorese of his choice and with the assistance of reputed Indonesian human rights organisations and the UN Human Rights Centre in Geneva.
- Lifting of press censorship;
- Freedom of political activities and assembly;
- Removal of restrictions on, and expansion of, the teaching of Portuguese and Portuguese schools;
- The UN Secretary-General appoints a Resident Representative who is responsible for all UN activities in East Timor, including reporting on the implementation of the accords.

PHASE TWO — AUTONOMY (FIVE TO 10 YEARS)

The first stage is indispensable for a gradual normalisation of the situation and for PHASE TWO to be effected.

At the end of Phase One,

- Portugal and Indonesia to normalise relations;
- Political parties are legalised;
- Portugal to be represented in East Timor by a legation of the European Community with a resident Portuguese official;

- A Portuguese Cultural Institute is set up with funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation, Fundação Oriente and the EC;
- Elections to be held for a local Assembly. The election process and procedures must conform with universally-accepted democratic norms. The UN to provide technical support and supervision of the election;
- Only East Timorese identified as such may vote and be eligible;
- The democratically-elected Assembly elects a Governor of the Territory who has to be an East Timorese;
- The Assembly and Governor have a 5-year mandate;
- The Territory may enter into trade relations with foreign countries, promulgate all its laws affecting investment, land ownership, property, etc;
- Remaining Indonesian troops are withdrawn within three months. The Territory will have no army. A Territorial police force is organised by the UN and is placed under the command of the elected Governor;
- The Territory will have its own immigration laws;
- Further reduction of Indonesian civil servants.

PHASE THREE — SELF-DETERMINATION

Phase Two may be extended by mutual consent. A ⅔ vote of the Assembly in support of extending Phase Two is needed before the proposal is put to a referendum.

If a referendum rejects extension of Phase Two, Phase Three commences.

If the Assembly fails to adopt a recommendation for the extension of Phase Two, it would continue to function for up to three years while negotiations with the Government in Indonesia take place.

If a referendum votes for the extension of Phase Two, elections are held within three months for a new Assembly and Governor.

At the end of Phase Two or the second regime of Phase Two, whatever the case, Phase Three covers:

- Preparations for a referendum on self-determination followed by general elections for a Constituent Assembly being undertaken within a period of one year;
- Transfer of power to the elected government takes place;
- East Timorese political leaders form a government of National Unity;
- East Timor is declared a Zone of Peace and of Neutrality to be guaranteed by the Permanent Members of the Security Council and ASEAN;
- East Timor joins ASEAN and the South Pacific Forum;
- East Timor accedes to, and ratifies, all international human rights instruments.

These are some of the ideas to be explored further when Indonesian leaders decide to come to terms with the reality that their 16-year occupation of East Timor has been an utter failure. I am prepared to fly to Indonesia or anywhere, at any time, to meet with senior Indonesian officials to commence the dialogue.

It was with an open mind, optimism and hope that in June 1974 I travelled to Indonesia and met with Foreign Minister Adam Malik to discuss the future of East Timor. The same spirit inspires me today.

The U.N. can play an active and constructive role in bringing about an end this conflict which has already cost the lives of more than 200,000 people. A more active and creative U.N. involvement will not entail too a high financial cost. Quite the contrary. Unlike the problems of Cambodia, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, the problem of East Timor is a simple one in that it does not involve a complexity of conflicting local, regional and international interests. It involves only two entities, the East Timorese and the Indonesian government. The East Timorese themselves are united around two institutions – the Resistance and the Catholic Church – and both have a clear common vision. Hence, East Timor could well be a test case in successful conflict resolution for the U.N.

The U.S. should abandon its current approach which is morally indefensible and which has lost its "Cold War" rationality. The rationale that sustained a policy that has brought so much harm to a people should be discarded and replaced by the moral imperative in support of a U.N. mediated peace process.

Portugal, for its part, having colonized East Timor for almost 500 years is now standing up for the East Timorese, a commendable attitude which should be supported by the U.S..

In a world where dialogue has for the most part replaced confrontation, the continuing use of force by Indonesia to resolve an issue which is eminently political must be rejected by the international community. The largest army in the world was not able to prevent the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet empire. Dictators all over the world have been overthrown or are being phased out. Has anyone forgotten the Shah of Iran, Somoza of Nicaragua, Duvalier of Haiti, Idi Amin of Uganda, Mengistu of Ethiopia, Stroessner of Paraguay, Pinochet of Chile, Marcos of the Philippines and Ceaucescu of Romania?

No matter the overwhelming force used against us, our will to be free will prevail. Our dream will never die. We will reach the mountain top.

Thank you.